

He is a magnificent person with an unbelievable degree of dedication to learning. He has gone from one of the greatest teachers I have known to one of the best principals one would know.

There are people like that all over the system. We are not helping them. This governmental regulation and bureaucracy is making it worse and making their lives more difficult. We can improve that, but not the way we are going. We are going to need some changes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

STANDING UP FOR TEXAS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I see the distinguished senior Senator from Massachusetts has been at it again, trying to bring the Presidential campaign to the Senate floor and misrepresenting the record in Texas. Once again, as promised, I am here to stand up for the record of the Governor of Texas and to stand up for the State of Texas.

I ask my distinguished colleague, the Senator from Massachusetts, if he would consider in the future not misrepresenting Texas for two reasons:

One is, I don't think it is persuasive to anyone in America to continue to hear the downgrading of a State in our country, and I certainly don't think it affects the Presidential race. Secondly, I just don't think that it is necessary or proper to downgrade a great State such as Texas or any other State in America.

Of course, I am from Texas; of course, I love my State. But I think, objectively speaking, a lot of other people do because we have just surpassed New York to become the second largest State in America. People are not moving there because they think we have a terrible education system. They are not moving there because they think we don't treat our children well. They are not moving there because we don't have health insurance for our children. They are not moving there because we have a bad environment. They are moving there because it is a wonderful place in which to live, and it has gotten better since George W. Bush became Governor.

So let me just set the record straight. We have a patients' bill of rights in Texas. It is the model upon which other States are now basing the laws that they are beginning to pass or look at passing. We have a very good patients' bill of rights because it has an independent review mechanism. You have an internal review and you have an external review so that the bottom line that we all want will occur, and that is that a patient will get the care the patient and the doctor believe is in the best interest of the patient. That is what a patients' bill of rights is. We also have caps on limits for lawsuits which are allowed after the exhaustion

of the internal and external reviews. There are caps on pain and suffering and noneconomic damages. That makes sure that we don't have a plethora of lawsuits, and it would keep the patient and the doctor making the decisions for health care in the forefront of our interest. So it is a model law. It is a good law. Whatever misrepresentations have been made about it, the Governor allowed it to become law. It happened on his watch.

Secondly, we are very proud of the improvements we are making in our public education system. Most States are not satisfied with where they are in public education. Texas is working very hard to improve our public education system, and under the leadership of Governor George W. Bush we are winning. Test scores are going up and, most especially, the test scores are going up in the minority communities. That is one of the focuses that Governor Bush has made in my home State of Texas because we all looked at the high school dropout rate. We were all unsatisfied with that number. We said, what can we do, especially in our Hispanic community, where the high school dropout rate is the highest per capita? We said, we have to go back to the basics.

That is what Governor Bush did. He went back to the basics and he put the resources into it. That is about \$8 million more than had been spent before. He said, we are going to go to the third grade level and that is going to be the firewall. We are going to test children in preschool; we are going to test them in the first grade and in the second grade. But if they can't read at grade level in the third grade, they will not be promoted to the fourth grade because we know that if children can't read at the early stages, they will never be able to reach their full potential in the public education system. That was the initiative of Governor Bush and, I might add, along with a great house speaker, Pete Leahy, a Democrat, and a Lieutenant Governor—at the time it was Bob Bullock, a Democrat; today, it is Rick Perry, a Republican. But we do work in a bipartisan way in the legislature. We always have in Texas. That is something that we have done since the days I served in the Texas legislature. We worked together, Democrats and Republicans. It is why I was so surprised when I came to the Senate and it didn't work that way here. We are not used to doing business that way.

With all due respect, I think Texas has it right because after the elections in Texas, we come together—the Governor and the legislature—to do what is best for the children and the people of Texas. Wouldn't it be refreshing if that were the case in Washington, DC? Wouldn't it be refreshing if the leadership that Governor Bush has shown, along with Pete Leahy and Bob Bullock, could be transferred to Washington, DC, with President Bush and TOM DASCHLE and RICHARD GEPHARDT?

Wouldn't that be refreshing? That is what Governor Bush would like to do because we think it works. We know it works because the test scores show that it works.

Madam President, we are making a huge leap in the right direction for improving public education, and we are going to the heart of the matter. We are making sure our children in the third grade can read, and we are focusing on the basics. We are focusing on reading, writing, arithmetic, history.

All of us have seen these polls of young people in our country where the television person walks up to the young person and says: What is the only State in America that is totally surrounded by water?

The young person can't answer the question. We know Hawaii is the answer, but I think we should focus on the basics—geography and history. That is what we are trying to do in Texas, and that is the kind of leadership we need for this country.

So I hope that we will examine the record in Texas in a positive way—or even in a neutral way, for Heaven's sake—because if you are neutral, you would see that Texas is a great place in which to live; that we have a great quality of life. Do we have problems? Sure. Are we working on those problems? Yes. We are doing it under the leadership of our Governor, George W. Bush.

Let me say, too, that we are also making great strides on the environment. We have a particular problem, particularly in Houston, TX, where 50 percent of the chemical refining plants in the world are located—the petrochemical refining plants. Fifty percent of the petrochemicals in the world are located on the gulf coast between Houston and Victoria.

I see that my time is up. I will step back and allow others to speak, but I will not step back if the record of Texas is misrepresented. I am here to stand for the facts and the good record of our Governor and our great State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. KENNEDY. Parliamentary inquiry. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Of course.

Mr. KENNEDY. I understand we will have some time. The House has not concluded with the continuing resolution. I understand it is agreeable with the leaders that the time remaining will be divided equally. Is the time remaining equally divided between the two sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The previous order provided that the remaining time until 7:30 would be equally divided.

The Senator from Oregon.

GORE-CHERNOMYRDIN AGREEMENT

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I rise as one Senator in this body